

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraphs beginning at page 6, line 8, as follows:

~~Fig. 2 is~~ Figs. 2A and 2B are a flow chart for Sender ePostal operations including Sender ePostal software according to the present invention used in the system shown in Fig. 1;

~~Fig. 3 is~~ Figs. 3A-3C are a flow chart for ePostal server software according to the present invention operating as an ePost Office communicating over the Internet between the Sender and Recipient as shown in Fig. 1;

~~Figs. 4A~~ Figs. 4A-1, 4A-2, and 4B are flow charts for Recipient ePostal operations with and without, respectively, Recipient ePostal software according to the present invention used in the system shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 5 is a view corresponding to Fig. 1 of alternative embodiments of this invention where Sender and Recipient do not have the ePostal software shown in ~~Figs. 2 and 4A~~ Figs. 2A, 2B, and 4A-2 on the computer they are presently using, but have ePostal accounts, and can send and receive eLetters through the ePostal system at the ePost Office window, or ePostal website;

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 8, as follows:

The present invention uses, complements and augments the basic, known SMTP Internet email and Web messaging HTTP systems. As used herein, "Internet" is intended to include both. The present invention features an ePost Office 20 (Fig. 1). In its presently preferred form, the ePost Office 20 is a server, or set of servers, running the exemplary software

24, 24' shown in Figs. 3, 4B, 6 and 7, and connected into the Internet by telecom links 16. While the ePost Office 20 will be described as a server running postal software 24, 24, it will be understood that the server can be plural servers or equivalent hardware and software. As used herein, the terms "ePost Office", ePO", "postal server" and "postal server and software" encompass all these variations and other known equivalents. The ePost Office 20 communicates and coordinates with and between the Sender 12 and Recipient 14 p.c.'s, servers or the like (the Sender and Recipient Terminals) that run exemplary software 22, 26 of ~~Figs. 2 and 4a~~ Figs. 2A, 2B, 4A-1 and 4A-2, which is, in a preferred form, installed on the Sender 12 and Recipient 14 p.c.'s or servers, respectively. The operation of the ePost Office 20, in interaction with the ePostal software 22, 26 at the Sender 12 and Recipient 14 terminals, utilizes both the basic Internet email SMTP system and the standard Web messaging HTTP system. The ePostal component software 22, 26 installed and/or operable on the Sender and Recipient p.c.'s or servers is compatible with the operating system and the application (email and browser) software on those p.c.'s or servers. This software 22, 26 is installed, e.g. in conjunction with the Sender and/or Recipient opening an account with the ePostal Service, e.g. at least in part by downloading.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 29, as follows:

The Sender 12 in Fig. 1 can choose to send his email over the Internet either in the conventional manner, or using the ePost Office 20. To utilize the ePost Office 20 of this invention, the Sender and Recipient need to do little more in the form of the invention shown in Fig. 1 than what they do in sending or receiving a conventional email. For example, with reference to ~~Fig. 2~~ Fig. 2A, the Sender 12 opens the email application S1 and creates an email, Step S2, as usual (with or without attachment) within his own email application. The Sender 12 needs only to click (Step S3) on an icon and proceed through (Step S4) an easy to follow set of selections of services he wants applied to his email by the ePostal system, clicking to continue, confirm and send the eLetter from the Sender's own p.c., all electronically and apparently the same to the Sender, via the Sender's own ISP 19, the Internet 18, and the Recipient's ISP 19, to the Recipient 14, as shown in Fig. 1.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 9, as follows:

An exemplary Sender software 22 according to the present invention as installed or operable on a Sender p.c., or the like, is shown and described in ~~Fig. 2~~Figs. 2A and 2B. The Sender software 22 reflects that the Sender has subscribed to the ePostal Service and has an account with it. Exemplary software 24, 24' according to the present invention that implements the ePost Office 20 in a manner according to the present invention are shown and described in ~~Figs. 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7~~Figs. 2A, 2B, 3, 4B, 6, and 7, respectively. An exemplary Recipient software 26 according to the present invention as installed on the Recipient p.c. 14, or the like, is shown and described in ~~Fig. 4A~~Figs 4A-1, 4A-2 and 4B. The Recipient software 26 reflects that the Recipient has subscribed to the ePostal Service and has an account with it. It will be understood by those skilled in the art that the specific code implementations of this software 22, 24, 24' and 26 will depend on the operating environment, e.g., the nature of the hardware, system and application software, the nature of the communications system and its operating protocol, interfaces, and the use of features such as encryption, filters, and firewalls. Users of the ePostal System can have different combinations of operating systems and email and browser software. This invention uses interfaces, add-ins, or various sets of procedures and programming each for interfacing with different combinations of sender or recipient operating systems and application (email and browser) software, which also function to interface through the links with the postal server 20.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 28, as follows:

As disclosed in, or with reference to, ~~Figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7~~Figs. 1, 2A, 2B, 3A-3C, 4A-1, 4A-2, 4B, 6 and 7, the ePost Office 20 and its software 24, 24', in cooperation with the software 22 and 26, accomplishes the mail processing functions of the traditional postal services in a completely electronic process. More specifically, the present invention, as delineated in detail in ~~Figs. 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7~~Figs. 2A, 2B, 3A-3C, 4A-1, 4A-2, 4B, 6 and 7, operates to provide:

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 10, line 24, as follows:

More specifically, the functions of Sender 12 exemplary software 22 as disclosed in or with reference to ~~Fig. 2~~Figs. 2A and 2B include:

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 13, line 16, as follows:

More specifically, the functions of Recipient 14 exemplary software 26 as disclosed in or with reference to ~~Fig. 4A~~ Figs 4A-1, 4A-2, and 4B include:

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 14, line 7, as follows:

Recipients 14 that do not have ePostal accounts and the exemplary software 26 as disclosed in or with reference to ~~Fig. 4A~~ Figs 4A-1 and 4A-2 can also receive email and access eLetters processed through the ePost Office 20, as shown in Figs. 3 and 4B. The email from Sender 12 received by a Recipient 14 without ePostal account and software has limited benefits from the ePostal system beyond screening for technical and content risk. For example, such non-account Recipient 14 cannot verify the email was actually processed by the ePost Office, or is from the Sender 12. Therefore the email lacks the related security benefits of the ePostal system 10, much like regular email. However, this email can offer such non-account Recipients 14 an option for verifying that the email was from Sender 12 and processed by the ePost Office 20. The email can provide the non-account Recipient 14 a code which enables the Recipient 14 to see Sender's 12 eLetter at the ePost Office window, or website 20. These eLetters have many of the features and benefits of the ePostal system such as technical and content screening, value and priority indicators, authentication of Sender's 12 terminal, certification of Sender 12, encryption and pre-paid replies to Sender 12, but also the significant limitations associated with not being received by and residing in Recipient's 14 own email application.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 15, line 22, as follows:

- Fig. 8 Senders 12, as shown in ~~Fig. 2~~ Figs. 2A and 2B, can send their email either with or without using ePostal services. However, with a network of Senders using ePostal services, the ePostal operations for the whole organization are much better if the Network ePostal software 28 works with both the Sender ePostal software at Senders 12 and the Corporate eMail Servers 13, rather than if ePostal software is only at the individual Senders 12

- computers. Such a system configuration would include: management of available ePostal features, administration of the company's total ePostal credits, communications with the ePost Office 20, and various related data collection and retention activities.